Listing of the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. **This listing contains no new amendments.**

Listing of claims:

1. (Original) A plasmid-free clone of Escherichia coli strain DSM 6601.

2. (Previously presented) The method of preparing a plasmid-free clone according to Claim 1, comprising the following steps:

a) introducing a resistance gene into plasmids pMut1 and pMut2,

b) introducing the *sacB* gene into the plasmids obtained in step a),

c) introducing the plasmids obtained in step b) into the E. coli strain DSM 6601 and cultivating the strain under conditions in which the naturally occurring plasmids pMut1 and pMut2 are displaced by the plasmids obtained in step b); and

d) cultivating the clones obtained in step c) that substantially only permit the growth of bacteria that lack the *sacB* gene.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, characterized in that the resistance genes are present in an expression cassette.

4. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 2, characterized in that the resistance genes are selected under tetracycline resistance or kanamycin resistance.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, characterized in that plasmid pMut1 is marked with a tetracycline resistance cassette and the *sacB* gene and that the original plasmid pMut2 is marked with a kanamycin resistance cassette and the *sacB* gene.

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5, in which the bacteria transformed with plasmid pMut1, that is marked with a tetracycline resistance cassette and the *sacB* gene, are cultivated on plates containing tetracycline and subsequently on plates containing saccharose, and that after elimination of plasmid pMut1 in the first step elimination of plasmid pMut2 takes place by cultivation on kanamycin plates and further cultivation on saccharose plates.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)